

Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Project Profile FLORIDA

Updated: March 21, 2001

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Program

Focus Areas Funded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveillance and Epidemiology – Core Activities • Surveillance and Epidemiology – Special Activities • Laboratory – Biological Agents • Health Alert Network
Florida has strengthened its capacity to respond to threats of bioterrorism by:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting a full-scale exercise involving an incident of domestic terrorism, including patient movement, triage, decontamination, and transport, on-site biological sample collection and packaging, and shipment of samples to a designated laboratory; • Completing a draft prototype disaster response plan for Weapons of Mass Destruction events for county health departments; • Forming a curriculum committee to identify existing training courses and to develop recommendations regarding content for a certificate training program; • Contracting with the Florida State University Askew School of Public Administration for the development of an Internet-based course entitled “Basic Emergency Management for Health and Medical Responders;” • Developing a WMD professional training matrix which will lead to a Certificate in Weapons of Mass Destruction Preparedness and Response; • Co-Sponsoring (with the U.S.V.A. Hospital - Bay Pines) a major symposium on WMD/Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response; • Providing each county health department and disaster medical assistance team in Florida with a set of WMD training, educational and reference materials; • Developing and implementing (January 2001) the states’ on-line, real time web based disease reporting and epidemiologic reporting system - Merlin; • Providing hands-on training to county health departments in the use of the Merlin system; • Conducting (with CDC and 2 county health departments) syndrome-based aberration-detection and statistical process control and surveillance systems for the 18 days surrounding the Superbowl and Gasparilla festival; • Negotiating a successful agreement with the University of Florida School of Medicine to develop and conduct an emergency room bioterrorism preparedness and management training program; • Providing bioterrorism surveillance and preparedness training to county health department staff members at the Annual Epidemiology Seminar; • Developing and testing a method for the immediate notification of

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- county health department epidemiology staff of key events;
- Providing medical-epidemiologic guidance to county health department staff and other county, state and federal agencies in a variety of anthrax hoaxes and some very real disease outbreaks;
- Reviewing the emergency (bioterrorism) plans for several hospitals and county health departments;
- Conducting (5) regional training programs regarding communicable disease surveillance, bioterrorism preparedness, outbreak investigation, investigation scenarios, introduction to the Merlin reporting system, and Rabies control;
- Developing web-based manuals for bioterrorism threats, foodborne illness investigations, waterborne illness investigations, and principles of environmental epidemiology;
- Establishing a bioterrorism information resource center on the Florida Department of Health intranet site for access by DOH and county health department staff;
- Researched and prepared a bioterrorism threat assessment tool for Florida;
- Developing a draft surveillance and epidemiology plan for bioterrorist events;
- Developing protocol and recruiting and training eleven sentinel hospitals for Statistical Process Control Surveillance, an aberration-detection method to examine the daily number of patient registrations at hospital emergency rooms and outpatient centers;
- Developing the Medical Examiner Data Examination project to examine daily death counts for counties in Florida and to review death records for all unusual death records in the state;
- The Bureau of Laboratories is working under grants from CDC and the DOD to enhance laboratory capacity, and hire personnel.
 1. Funding has enabled travel to and participation in national and regional bioterrorism preparedness meetings and a CDC training course in Atlanta.
 2. Developing standardized protocols for the rapid response and detection of biological agents.
 3. Exploring new collection and extraction procedures to enhance PCR procedures.
 4. Training scientists to perform microscopic examinations to rapidly assess the presence of bacterial organisms.
 5. Developing rapid PCR assays for the detection of pathogenic organisms commonly associated with foodborne diseases and

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	<p>which can be used as BT agents.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Establishing communication network for all three laboratories. 7. Establishing close relationship with CDC for validation studies of new developments. 8. Developing, in cooperation with the FBI, evidence preservation and chain of custody procedures. 9. Developing a protocol to collect and safely transport clinical samples from patients suspected of being infected with a BT agent. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a comprehensive contact list of relevant emergency personnel, including, but not limited to, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, State and Local law enforcement officials, hospital disaster managers, and fire and rescue departments; • Upgraded laboratories and equipment which has facilitated the rapid resolution of specimens submitted for bioterrorism threat agent testing; • Expanding the downlink satellite network from 84 sites to over 100 sites; • Developing an emergency telephone capability for all county health department epidemiologists; • Creating an "alert" function to e-mail key county health department and Department staff; and, • Creating "Blast fax" capabilities to rapidly alert county health department epidemiology staff members.
<p>Project Year 2 Plans (August 31, 2000-August 30, 2001) include:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and establishing a comprehensive plan for the management of surveillance and epidemiologic activities related to bioterrorist events; • Completing design and development of initial technical and end-user training on the maintenance and use of Health Alert Network technology; • Completing training needs survey; • Completing the design of bioterrorism surveillance training, specialized investigation training, and using Health Alert technology courses; • Implementing a system for providing immediate dissemination of surveillance and epidemiology information to the key group of health professionals who need such information to manage a real or suspected bioterrorist event; • Training county health department staff in surveillance and epidemiology aspects of bioterrorism; • Developing electronic laboratory reporting from the state laboratory database to the Merlin system; • Developing a core of expert epidemiologists in the state;

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintaining statutes, rules, policies, and procedures that support appropriate public health action during real and suspected bioterrorist events; and,• Developing and validating innovative, accurate, and efficient surveillance models with potential for the early identification of bioterrorist events. |
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Contact Information	<p>General Information</p> <p>Ellery F. Gray, PhD Phone: 850-245-4444 X 4041 Email: ellery_gray@doh.state.fl.us</p> <p>Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance-Core Capacity</p> <p>Don Ward Phone: 850-245-4405 Fax: 850-922--9299 E-mail: donald_ward@doh.state.fl.us</p> <p>Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance -Special Projects</p> <p>Steven Wiersma, MD, MPH Phone: 850-245-4401 Fax: 850-922-9299 E-mail: steven_wiersma@doh.state.fl.us</p> <p>Biologic Laboratory</p> <p>Ming S. Chan, PhD Phone: 904-791-1550 Fax: 904-791-1567 E-mail: ming_chan@doh.state.fl.us</p> <p>Health Alert Network</p> <p>Mark Green Phone: 850-245-4009 Fax: 850-921-1898 E-mail: mark_green@doh.state.fl.us</p>												
Key Emergency Contacts	<table> <tr> <td>Federal Emergency Management Agency:</td> <td>(770) 220-5200</td> </tr> <tr> <td>State Emergency Management Agency:</td> <td>(904) 413-9969</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Federal Bureau of Investigation:</td> <td>(904) 721-1211 Jacksonville</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Federal Bureau of Investigation:</td> <td>(305) 944-9101 Miami</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Federal Bureau of Investigation:</td> <td>(813) 273-4566 Tampa</td> </tr> <tr> <td>State Public Health Agency:</td> <td>(850) 245-4040</td> </tr> </table>	Federal Emergency Management Agency:	(770) 220-5200	State Emergency Management Agency:	(904) 413-9969	Federal Bureau of Investigation:	(904) 721-1211 Jacksonville	Federal Bureau of Investigation:	(305) 944-9101 Miami	Federal Bureau of Investigation:	(813) 273-4566 Tampa	State Public Health Agency:	(850) 245-4040
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